

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02  
SS-15 USIA-06 CU-02 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03  
TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 EPG-02 SIL-01  
OMB-01 IGA-02 ACDA-07 EUR-12 NEA-10 DLOS-09 OES-07  
INT-05 /151 W

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R 031226Z JUN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6758  
INFO AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PORT LOUIS 0602

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT PFOR PGOV PLOS UR MP XO  
SUBJECT: MAURITIUS WEEKLY REVIEW - JUNE 3, 1977

REF: PORT LOUIS 579

SUMMARY: PORT LOUIS 0601 PROVIDES A SUMMARY OF THIS CABLE. END  
SUMMARY.

1. THE LABOR PARTY HELD ITS ANNUAL CONGRESS ON MAY 29, AND ELECTED A NEW PRESIDENT AND CONFIRMED A NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. DR. CHAPERON, THE OUTGOING PRESIDENT WHO WAS RETIRING AFTER SERVING THE PARTY FOR 16 YEARS, WAS REPLACED BY JAMES BURTY DAVID, THE YOUNG DEPUTY FROM QUATRE BORNES. THREE OTHER CANDIDATES IN THE INITIAL RUNNING, WITHDREW BEFORE HAVING THEIR NAMES PUT UP FOR A VOTE. THEN THE NAMES OF THE PARTY'S NEW CENTRAL COMMITTEE WERE PROPOSED IN A SINGLE LIST. AFTER SOME HEATED BUT INEFFECTUAL CHALLENGES FROM THE FLOOR, THE PARTY'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE LIST WAS ADOPTED. IT IS MADE UP OF ALL THE CURRENT LABOR PARTY MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (INCLUDING NEWCOMER SURESH MOORBA), AND INCLUDES A HANDFUL OF OLDER PARTY STALWARTS WHO DO NOT  
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CURRENTLY HOLD PUBLIC OFFICE. THE PRESS HAS DUBBED THE MANEUVER AS A VICTORY FOR THE PARTY'S "OLD-GUARD."

2. MORE SPECIFICALLY, THE PARTY FACTION LED BY MINISTER OF EDUCATION (AND THE PARTY'S SECRETARY GENERAL) JAGATSINGH IS SAID TO HAVE EMERGED IN A DOMINANT POSITION. DAVID, A PROTEGE OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, MAY NEXT TRY TO

ENGINEER THE RE-ELECTION BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF JAGATSINGH AS SECRETARY-GENERAL. THE OUTCOME OF THE PARTY CONGRESS IS SEEN AS A SET-BACK FOR THE BOOLELL (MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE) FACTION OF THE PARTY AS WELL AS THAT SEGMENT OF THE PARTY WHICH WANTED NEW AND YOUNGER BLOOD TO ASSUME A PREDOMINANT ROLE.

3. THE 1,000 DELEGATES IN ATTENDANCE AT THE LABOR CONGRESS REPORTEDLY LOUDLY APPLAUDED EX-MMM DEPUTY SURESH MOORBA WHO SPOKE BRIEFLY AND THANKED PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM FOR ACCEPTING HIM INTO THE RANKS OF THE PARTY. RAMGOOLAM ALSO SPOKE TO THE CONFERENCE AND (A) MAINTAINED THAT THE LABOR PARTY IS NOT IN FAVOR OF NATIONALIZING THOSE SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY THAT ARE EFFICIENT, SUCH AS THE SUGAR INDUSTRY, BUT THAT IN THE CASE OF THE DOCKS AT THE PORT AND THE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (BUS) SYSTEM, THE QUESTION WOULD BE "SERIOUSLY STUDIED," (B) PRAISED THE PMSD FOR JOINING WITH LABOR FOLLOWING THE DECEMBER 20 ELECTIONS TO MAINTAIN "THE ORDER AND ECONOMIC STABILITY OF THE COUNTRY," (C) JUSTIFIED THE COALITION WITH THE PMSD AS IN KEEPING WITH THE LABOR PARTY'S POLICY OF "MIDDLE OF THE ROAD," (D) REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY, WHICH HAD VOTED HEAVILY FOR THE MMM, AND ASKED: "WHAT HAS THE MMM DONE FOR YOU?." RAM EMPHASIZED THAT THE "COUNTRY DOES NOT BELONG TO ONE PARTY OR TO ONE COMMUNITY, BUT TO THE WHOLE POPULATION," AND (E) POINTED THAT THE ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND INCREASED STANDARD OF LIVING MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH HIS GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES.

4. RAMGOOLAM'S PRAISE OF THE PMSD MAY HAVE BEEN MADE TO  
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OFFSET PUBLIC SPECULATION THAT WAS GENERATED WHEN LE MAURICIEN OF MAY 27 REPUBLISHED PARTS OF AN ARTICLE BY BRITISH JOURNALIST DAVID MARTIN OF THE OBSERVER, WHO VISITED MAURITIUS LAST MONTH. MARTIN CLAIMED THAT PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM HAD EXPRESSED SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT THE COALITION WITH THE PMSD, WHICH IS UNPOPULAR WITH HIS LABOR SUPPORTERS. ACCORDING TO MARTIN, RAM HAD CONCLUDED, IN RETROSPECT, THAT HE COULD HAVE AGREED TO A PRE-ELECTORAL COALITION WITH THE MMM "WITH SOME MODIFICATIONS" WHICH HE DID NOT SPECIFY. IN RAM'S OPINION, A LABOR-MMM COALITION " WOULD NOT HAVE SPLIT THE LEFT AND WOULD HAVE PROVIDED A BETTER FUTURE FOR MAURITIUS." MARTIN SPECULATED THAT THERE MIGHT BE A REALIGNMENT OF FORCES SOON, AS THE LABOR DOMINATED GOVERNMENT WOULD LIKE TO IMPOSE WAGE RESTRAINTS ON THE PREDOMINANTLY MMM-CONTROLLED TRADE UNIONS. IN THE SAME ARTICLE MARTIN REPORTED THAT AN EMISSARY FROM VORSTER HAD INFORMED THE MMM THAT IF IT CAME TO POWER AND STOPPED FLIGHTS OF SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS TO MAURITIUS, HE WOULD IN TURN STOP THE FLOW OF SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISTS TO THIS COUNTRY.

5. THE MMM ALSO HELD AN IMPORTANT MEETING ON MAY 29 IN WHICH 153 OF THE PARTY'S "BRANCH" LEADERS DISCUSSED ITS CURRENT POLITICAL HEALTH AND POLICIES, AND OUTLINED FUTURE STRATEGY. THOUGH THE 8 HOUR POLICIES, AND OUTLINED FUTURE STRATEGY. THOUGH THE 8 HOUR MARATHON MEETING REPORTEDLY PRODUCED SOME HEATED EXCHANGES, THE DELEGATES IN THE END PASSED A "MOTION OF CONFIDENCE" IN SUPPORT OF THE PARTY'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE, AND APPARENTLY RECONFIRMED THEIR SUPPORT FOR SECRETARY GENERAL BERENGER AND PRESIDENT JUGNAUTH. THE CONFERENCE VOTED OVERWHELMINGLY TO CONTINUE THE PARTY'S PROGRAM TO "MOBILIZE THE CLASSES" AND "RESTRUCTURE THE PARTY" TO EMERGE IN THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTIONS VICTORIOUS. ATTEMPTS TO ATTRACT THE "LEFT-WING" OF THE LABOR PARTY TO FORM A MMM GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ABANDONED. MASS PUBLIC MEETINGS WOULD BE ORGANIZED TO HELP ACHIEVE THE PARTY'S GOALS, IT WAS DECIDED.

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6. THE FOUR MEMBERS OF THE PARTY'S POLITBURO WHO RESIGNED IN PROTEST LAST WEEK (REFTEL) WERE GIVEN TIME TO SPEAK AND EXPLAIN THEIR POSITIONS. LATER THE ASSEMBLY VOTED TO CENSURE MMM DEPUTY HARISH RAMPHUL FOR HIS "LACK OF DISCIPLINE" AND HIS REMARKS TO THE PRESS CONCERNING THE MMM (REFTEL). THE ASSEMBLY ALSO PASSED A RESOLUTION ASKING THAT AN INQUIRY BE MADE INTO CERTAIN ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING RAMPHUL'S ACTIVITIES. THE ERRANT DEPUTY WAS NOT PRESENT AT THE MEETING TO DEFEND HIMSELF.

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XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 EPG-02 SIL-01 OMB-01 IGA-02  
ACDA-07 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 DLOS-09 OES-07 INT-05  
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7. IN A STATEMENT TO THE PRESS FOLLOWING GHE MMM ASSEMBLY'S MOTION TO CENSURE HIM, RAMPHUL EXPRESSED HIS "DISGUST AND INDIGNATION" OVER THE ACTIONS, CLAIMING THAT THE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST HIM WERE "FALSE AND MALICIOUS" AND THAT HE WAS BEING MADE INTO A SCAPEGOAT. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT HE PLANNED TO REMAIN IN THE PARTY TO FIGHT AGAINST THOSE WHO WANTED TO CREATE DISORDER. IF THE MMM DECIDES TO EXPEL HIM FROM THE PARTY, HE SAID HE WOULD RESIGN HIS SEAT IN PARLIAMENT RATHER THAN SWITCH TO THE LABOR PARTY.

8. IN AN EDITORIAL MAY 27 IN LE MILITANT, BERENGER SPOKE OF THE "NEXT GENERAL ELECTIONS AND HOW, IN SUCH AN EVENT, THE MMM WOULD SURELY BE VICTORIOUS, GIVEN THE "ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CRISES" WHICH THE LABOR"PMSD GOVERNMENT HAD PRODUCED. BERENGER STATED THAT THE ELECTIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE CALLED BECAUSE OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL DEADLOCK THAT WOULD RESULT OVER THE QUESTION OF CONVERTING MAURITIUS INTO A REPUBLIC. HE POINTED OUT THAT PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM'S PROMISE TO HOLD A REFERENDUM ON THE QUESTION THIS YEAR WOULD BRING THE ISSUEP INEVITABLY BEFORE THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY. FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE OF THAT NATURE, THREE-FOURTHS OF THE ASSEMBLY MUST  
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AGREE. IN THE FAILURE TO RECEIVE THIS VOTE, THE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO CALL ELECTIONS. COMMENT: BERENGER SEEMED TO BE TRYING TO BOLSTER THE FAILING SPIRITS OF HIS MMM PARTISANS, MANY OF WHOME ARE DIVIDED OVER THE FUTURE COURSE OF THE PARTY AND OVER HIS LEADERSHIP ABILITIES. THE FALL OF THE GOVERNMENT OVER THIS ISSUE, SEEMS VERY REMOTE, IN FACT. RAMGOOLAM DOES NOT WISH TO CALL A GENERAL ELECTIONS FOR SOME TIME; IT IS CERTAIN THAT HE WILL NOT PERMIT ANY ISSUE TO BE USED TO FORCE AN ELECTION BEFORE HE'S READY TO CALL ONE. END COMMENT.

9. ON MAY 31, AFTER QUICKLY VOTING INTO LAW SEVEN BILLS, INCLUDING THE MARITIME ZONES BILL ESTABLISHING A 200 MILE ECONOMIC RESOURCE ZONE, THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY RECESSED UNTIL OCTOBER 18. THE BILLS IN QUESTION WERE, WITH ONE EXCEPTION, NON-CONTROVERSIAL AND PASSED WITHOUT DEBATE. ONLY THE MARITIME ZONES BILL SPARKED SOME REACTION FROM THE MMM, WHICH, THOUGH IT WAS IN FAVOR OF THE BILL, COULD NOT RESIST THE OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE THE QUESTION OF THE MAURITIAN CLAIM TO DIEGO GARCIA, AND THE NEED TO DEMILITARIZE THE INDIAN OCEAN. BERENGER PROPOSED, IN ADDITION, THAT THE GOVERNMENT REFUSE ACCESS TO PORT LOUIS OF ALL FOREIGN WARSHIPS.

10. IN RESPONSE TO THE MMM POINTS OF CONTENTION, THE PRIME MINISTER DEFENDED THE WISDOM OF THE BILL, AS WELL AS THE EFFORTS HIS GOVERNMENT IS MAKING TO NEGOTIATE SOLUTIONS TO VARIOUS CLAIMS TO ISLANDS AND SHOALS IN THE AREA. HE REMARKED THAT MAURITIUS HAD TO DEFEND ITS RIGHTS AGAINST "GREEDY AND SELFISH NATIONS" SUCH AS RUSSIA, AND THAT MAURITIUS COULD NOT EXPECT TO WIN ITS POINTS ALL THE TIME. ( THE RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR WAS PRESENT, SITTING IN THE DIPLOMATIC GALLERY WHEN THE REMARK WAS MADE.)

11. THE MARITIME ZONES ACT CODIFIES MAURITIAN POLICY ON THE LAW OF THE SEA. THE NEW LAW EXTENDS THE TERRITORIAL SEA TO 12 MILES AND WILL CALIM AN EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC RESOURCE ZONE OF 200 MILES. THE EXPLORATION AND EXPLOITATION OF THE  
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CONTINENTAL SHELF IS ALSO REGULATED BY THE NEW LAW, WITH SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH CLOSELY CONTROLLED BY THE GOVERNMENT. MAURITIUS, UNDER THE ACT, CLAIMS FULL SOVEREIGN RIGHTS OVER THE CONTINENTAL SHELF, AND DEFINES IT AS COMPRISING ALL THE AREA UP TO AND INCLUDING THE OUTER EDGE OF THE CONTINENTAL MARGIN, OR THE AREA TO A DISTANCE OF TWO HUNDRED NAUTICAL MILES FROM THE BASELINE WHERE THE OUTER EDGE OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF DOES NOT EXTEND TO THAT DISTANCE. THE LAW PRESERVES THE RIGHT OF INNOCENT PASSAGE FOR FOREIGN COMMERCIAL SHIPS IN TERRITORIAL WATERS. FOREIGN WARSHIPS AND SUBMARINES ARE GRANTED FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION IN THE ECONOMIC RESOURCE ZONE WATERS, AND ARE ALSO PERMITTED PASSAGE IN MAURITIAN TERRITORIAL WATERS, AFTER NOTIFYING THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE IN ADVANCE. HE MAY UNDER THE NEW LAW, REFUSE PASSAGE TO FOREIGN WAR VESSELS IN TERRITORIAL WATERS IF HE SHOULD DEEM IT IN MAURITIUS' BEST INTERESTS.

12. THE NEW LAW STEMS FROM AN AGREEMENT WORKED OUT WITH THE SEYCHELLES' PRIME MINISTER WHO VISITED MAURITIUS APRIL 11-15. (SEE PORT LOUIS 390.) THE SEYCHELLES WILL ALSO, ACCORDING TO THE AGREEMENT, INSTITUTE THE SAME LAW. THE TEXT OF THE PROPOSED LAW IS BEING AIR POUCHED TOTHE DEPARTMENT UNDER COVER OF PORT LOUIS A-34.  
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## Message Attributes

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